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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women

Statement submitted by the Altrusa International; Armenian International Women's Association; Associated Country Women of the World; Baha'i International Community; International Alliance of Women; International Association of Women in Radio and Television; International Council of Women; International Federation of Business and Professional Women; International Federation of Settlements and Neighborhood Centres; International Federation of University Women; International Federation of Women in Legal Careers; International Federation of Women Lawyers; National Council of Women of the United States; Pan Pacific and South-East Asia Women's Organization; Soroptimist International; Trickle Up Program; United Nations Association of the United States of America; United States Committee for UNIFEM; Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund; World Young Women's Christian Association; Zonta International, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/CN.6/2008/1.

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Statement

We, the undersigned international and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, all members of the NGO Committee on UNIFEM, direct your attention to the outstanding leadership of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) in the theme of the discussions for the Commission on the Status of Women, "Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women".

UNIFEM has played a leading role in promoting gender-responsive budget analysis on the national level. Budgets represent a financial translation of a government's policies and priorities, moving promised commitments to actual resource allocation. Gender budgets are not separate budgets for women and do not aim solely to increase spending on women-specific programmes.

In 2006, UNIFEM has worked with more than thirty countries to promote the application of gender responsive budget development that focuses on how government expenditures and revenues have different impacts on men and women, highlighting inequalities in areas such as income, assets, decision-making power, services needed and social responsibilities for care that need to be addressed. An important aspect of this process has been to make women's work, much of which is unpaid, economically visible. Gender inequality has also been a factor in major losses to economic efficiency and human development. The analysis of national budgets with the gender lens that UNIFEM has provided has assisted governments to adjust their policies and reallocate resources to advance gender equality and women's empowerment. Developing disaggregated data of age and sex in national statistics would help to show that progress is being made.

In Mozambique, UNIFEM's gender-responsive budgeting efforts identified gender disparities in the country's poverty reduction strategy. Responding to the voices of women's organizations for a need to focus more resources on eradication of violence against women, UNIFEM worked with government officials to ensure that public expenditures on health and violence included a gender perspective.

UNIFEM and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) produced two publications-a training manual to further understanding of gender-responsive budgeting as a tool for promoting women's rights and a resource pack which gives advice on how to employ gender budgeting techniques into national policy frameworks to advance specific needs.

UNIFEM's Local Level Gender Responsive Budgets program has targeted the level where the delivery of services and resources are carried out. UNIFEM has sponsored workshops for governments and local officials on gender responsive budgeting. These meetings make elected representatives and civil servants aware of the potential of a gender perspective in budgeting. One such initiative in Mysore, India prompted an initiative by an elected representative that resulted in a free medical clinic for local residents who previously had to walk five miles and wait two days to see a doctor at a private hospital...

Gender budget analysis has been a valuable tool for UNIFEM in promoting the rights-based approach which is central to all its work. Gender-responsive budget analysis is a way to hold governments

accountable for their commitments to women's human rights and gender equality, such as the Beijing *Platform for Action* and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), by linking these commitments to the distribution, use and generation of public resources.

Within the UN system, UNIFEM has worked to show that gender responsive budgets are a means of strengthening economic governance throughout the world, engaging members of civil society, particularly women who are often excluded, in debate on political and economic policy. Education and information are crucial to the confidence building and participation of women and girls.

UNIFEM has also promoted regional and global advocacy in the area of gender responsive budgeting. In 2001 when UNIFEM co-convened the first consultation on gender budgeting in Brussels, few countries had experience with gender budgeting; today more than seventy do. At that conference, collaborating with the European Union and other European entities, the implementation of gender responsive budgets by 2015 was endorsed. Ministries of Finance and Women's Divisions from the East African Region have also called for policies that consider gender aspects in budgeting allocating resources.

The activities of UNIFEM described in the area of financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women are just one aspect of its critical work to strengthen and promote the rights and participation of women throughout the world.

UNIFEM has also assumed a central leadership role in promoting the rights and needs of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations and is, therefore, also vitally interested in the review theme for the 2008 CSW, "Women's participation in conflict prevention, management, conflict resolution and post-conflict peace-building." UNIFEM, in partnership with several NGOs, was in the forefront of advocacy for the adoption of the landmark Security Council resolution #1325 on women, peace and security. This resolution recognizes the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, calls for the full implementation of humanitarian human rights laws to protect women and girls during and after conflict, directs attention to the special needs of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations, singles out protection against gender-based violence, especially rape, and requests that the Secretary General conduct a study including data on women and girls in armed conflict. UNIFEM has been monitoring the implementation of this resolution in conflict areas around the world. UNIFEM has created a web portal WomenWarPeace.org that summarizes UNIFEM's work in different conflict countries, and provides gender profiles for each country as well as information on issues and challenges of women and girls in those countries. UNIFEM will have valuable contributions to provide to these discussions regarding progress on implementation, challenges and promising practices in building partnerships for gender justice in post-conflict situations.

For more than thirty years, UNIFEM's leadership in promoting rights for women and girls has created substantial change in their economic, political and social opportunities. UNIFEM will continue to address the difficult and multifaceted discrimination that women and girls around the world face every day working with many partners at all levels toward the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women. We wholeheartedly endorse their efforts.